

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8431
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SECDEF WASHDC
USCINCO SQUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 7109

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, MORG, VE
SUBJECT: SEVEN CABINET MINISTERS APPOINTED

REF: CARACAS 7101 (NOTAL)

1. EVENING JULY 15 PRESIDENT PEREZ SWORE IN SIX OF SEVEN NEW
MINISTERS HE HAD JUST APPOINTED. THE NEW INCUMBENTS ARE:

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS - SIMON ALBERTO CONSALVI

MINISTER OF FINANCE - LUIS JOSE SILVA LUONGO

MINISTER OF DEFENSE - MAJOR GENERAL FERNANDO PAREDES BELLO

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE - GUSTAVO PINTO COHEN

MINISTER OF THE SECRETARIAT OF THE PRESIDENCY - CARMELO
LAURIA LESSEUR

MINISTER OF STATE, PRESIDENT OF THE INVESTMENT FUND -
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HECTOR HURTADO

MINISTER OF STATE FOR CULTURE, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY -
JOSE LUIS SALCEDO BASTARDO

THE NEW FOREIGN MINISTER, DR. CONSALVI, VENEZUELA'S UN
AMBASSADOR, WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY AND WILL BE SWORN

EARLY NEXT WEEK.

2. THE NEW FACES IN THE CABINET ARE THOSE OF CONSALVI, SILVA, PAREDES BELLO, AND PINTO. FOLLOWING ARE BRIEF BIO SKETCHES OF THESE INDIVIDUALS:

--CONSALVI, 50, IS A LONG-STANDING MEMBER OF AD, WHO WAS IN EXILE IN THE 1950S. UPON THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY, HE ROSE SWIFTLY IN VARIOUS GOVERNMENT AND JOURNALIST POSITIONS. IN 1974, CONSALVI BECAME MINISTER OF STATE FOR INFORMATION. LATER THAN YEAR, CONSALVI ASKED PRESIDENT PEREZ TO APPOINT HIM TO THE UN JOB BECAUSE CONSALVI'S ELDEST CHILD DEVELOPED A SERIOUS ILLNESS WHICH REQUIRED TREATMENT IN NEW YORK. PEREZ READILY ASSENTED. CONSALVI IS VERY CLOSE TO PEREZ AND IS A MAN WITH SOLID DIPLOMATIC AND LITERARY SKILLS AND A QUICK INTELLIGENCE. THOROUGHLY KNOWLEDGABLE ABOUT THE UNITED STATES AND THE WORKING OF THE UN SYSTEM, HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO DEFEND VENEZUELAN FOREIGN POLICY INTERSTS EFFECTIVELY.

--SILVA, 47, AN ECONOMIST, LAWYER, AND TEACHER, RECEIVED POST GRADUATE TRAINING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, AND THEN HAS HELD VARIOUS IMPORTANT POSITIONS IN THE FIELDS OF INSURANCE, SOCIAL SECURITY, THE CENTRAL BANK OF VENEZUELA, AND IN BUSINESS.
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--PAREDES BELLO, 50, PROFESSIONALLY COMPETENT AND INTELLIGENT, IS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS POLITICAL CONNECTIONS TO AD, A CLOSE PERSONAL FRIEND OF PRESIDENT PEREZ, HIS LONG-STANDING TIES TO AD MAKE HIM CLEARLY A "POLITICAL GENERAL." "EXILED" AS AIR ATTACHE TO LONDON DURING THE CALDERA ADMINISTRATION, HE WAS APPOINTED AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STATE TWO DAYS AFTER THE INAUGURATION OF PEREZ. LESS THAN A YEAR LATER HE WAS APPOINTED COMMANDER OF THE AIR FORCE AND PROMOTED TO MAJOR GENERAL. HE APPEARS TO BE MILDLY PRO-US PROFESSIONALLY AND IS PROUD OF HIS USAF TRAINING.

--PINTO, AN AGRICULTURAL ENGINEER, HAS SPENT MOST OF HIS PROFESSIONAL CAREER IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE. PREVIOUS POSITIONS INCLUDE: CHIEF OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT, DIRECTOR OF BUDGETARY PLANNING, COORDINATOR OF AGRICULTURAL REFORM STUDIES, AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE IN WASHINGTON, CONSULTANT TO SELA, AND PROFESSOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ON THE AGRICULTURAL FACULTY AT THE UCV.

3. THE OTHER CHANGES INVOLVE MINISTERS WHO ARE SWITCHING JOBS. FORMER FINANCE MINISTER HURTADO MOVES OVER TO MANAGE THE VENEZUELAN INVESTMENT FUND. THE OTHER TWO CHANGES INVOLVE MINISTERS OF STATE WHICH ARE NOT PORTFOLIO POSITIONS AND WHICH EQUATE MOST CLOSELY WITH PRESIDENTIAL SPECIAL ASSISTANT JOBS IN THE U.S. SYSTEM. LAURIA, BRIGHT, DYNAMIC, AND CLOSE TO THE PRESIDENT, WILL BECOME THE VIRTUAL CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE PRESIDENCY IN HIS NEW JOB. HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO RUN A TIGHT PRESIDENTIAL SHIP AT THE PALACE. APPARENTLY HIS MINISTER OF STATE POSITION FOR BASIC INDUSTRY IS BEING ABOLISHED. FURTHER, PEREZ HAS NOW CREATED A NEW POSITION, MINISTER OF STATE FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND CULTURE FOR SALCEDO BASTARDO. SALCEDO, CONFIDENTIAL

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A MAN DEDICATED TO LITERATURE AND CULTURE, WILL HAVE SUBSTANTIAL INTEREST IN THE CULTURAL SIDE OF HIS NEW POSITION. HIS RESPONSIBILITIES OVER SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY REMAIN TO BE SEEN. VAKY

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